ELECTION TOOLKIT
A Guide for Engaging Candidates on the Sustainable Development Goals

BC2030
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Introduction

About BC 2030

The British Columbia Council for International Cooperation (BCCIC) is a member network of organisations and individuals working towards global sustainable development with a focus on international cooperation. The Council has been in operation since 1989 and its main role is to support its consortium members through skills training, information access, networking opportunities, sourcing funding opportunities, and providing a voice for members with higher level organisations such as the provincial government, Global Affairs Canada, and at international events such as UN meetings and conferences.

The member organisations that comprise BCCIC are diversely engaged in the many aspects of sustainable development, but share a common directive. That is, members constitute organisations, groups, and individuals based in British Columbia who support projects overseas and/or promote an understanding of global citizenship through related work within the province. The Council’s members are all working towards a common purpose: To achieve a more equitable world through their involvement in overseas projects, global education and/or public awareness in British Columbia.

Given the shared mandate of BCCIC and its member organisations, the Council is currently focusing on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – the successor to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). While the MDGs outlined eight international development goals (see Appendix I) - from halving extreme poverty and ending the spread of HIV/AIDS to achieving universal primary education¹ - to be achieved by 2015, the SDGs (see Appendix II) are a framework of 17 interconnected goals that aim to address the world’s environmental, social, economic, and security challenges. Unprecedented in nature, these new goals seek to build upon the successes of the MDGs while going further, as indicated by the goals’ universal and aspirational approach. The SDGs are outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Agenda 2030), which entered into force in 2016 and will carry the world through 2030.²

In part, due to the universality of the SDGs and in part due to the corresponding goals of BCCIC, its member organisations, and the SDGs, BCCIC has launched the BC 2030 initiative. BC 2030 seeks to make the SDGs a common issue throughout the provincial election with

all party candidates, media, and stakeholders engaging in the discourse and putting forward strategies and commitments towards establishing BC as a leader in realising the SDGs. To this end, this non-partisan initiative is employing the SDGs and Agenda 2030 as a common framework for all civil society groups lobbying and campaigning throughout the provincial elections so that specific sector issues are continuously framed and communicated to politicians and the public through the lens of the SDGs.

A successful BC 2030 initiative will be evidenced by: party representatives approaching BCCIC and its members for information and/or guidance around the SDGs; the SDGs and Agenda 2030 being frequently referenced in election campaigns and in the media; provincial candidates framing their policy agendas in reference to the SDGs and Agenda 2030; and the distribution and use of this election toolkit.

The BC 2030 Election Toolkit

This election toolkit is intended to help facilitate individuals’ and organisations’ engagement with the candidates before, during, and after the official 2017 electoral campaign. The toolkit will help in conducting non-partisan advocacy for BC 2030 by providing guides for the provincial election, various tools for engaging candidates, and messaging templates. While some components of this toolkit – such as the guidelines for conducting non-partisan advocacy – should be closely adhered to, others – such as the messaging templates - are mere suggestions to help get you started as well as encourage consistency throughout the initiative.
The 2017 Provincial Election

Key Dates

Electoral Campaign
The official election campaign is 28 days long, starting when the election is called. Because British Columbia has fixed election terms, with elections being held on the second Tuesday of May every four years, this means that the election will be called on Tuesday, April 11, 2017 and the campaign will run from Wednesday, April 12, 2017 to Monday, May 8, 2017.

Voter Registration
Canadian citizens who are 18 years of age or older and have lived in British Columbia for the past six months can register to vote one of four ways:

1. general registration
2. in conjunction with voting
3. during an enumeration
4. at a special registration opportunity.

General registration allows voters to register at any time, except during the ‘closed period’ of an election. The closed period for this election runs from Wednesday, April 12, 2017 (the day after the election is called) to Thursday, May 11, 2017 (the second day after General Voting Day).

General registration can be done by phone, mail, email, fax, in person at any Service BC office or the Elections BC office in Victoria, or online at https://eregister.electionsbc.gov.bc.ca/ovr/welcome.aspx.

Alternatively, voters can register at their voting station during the election. This is called registration in conjunction with voting. Those who are not on the voters list, or whose registration is out of date, will be asked to complete an Application for Registration as a Provincial Voter at the voting place. This requires two pieces of personal identification showing, in combination, the voter’s name, current residential address, and signature.

Enumerations are another chance to register as a voter. An enumeration is a registration event directed to all eligible voters or specific groups of voters in one or more electoral districts.

Lastly, the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) is able to set up special registration opportunities. For example, the CEO might decide to sponsor a registration booth at an exhibition, trade
show, or seniors’ centre. Voters who register at a special registration opportunity will be asked to fill out an application for registration as a provincial voter. Special registration opportunities cannot be held during the ‘closed period’ of an election.

**General Voting**

To vote during General Voting, visit your assigned voting place between **8 am and 8 pm (Pacific Time)** on **Tuesday, May 9, 2017**.

**Advance Voting**

Advance voting is available from **8 am to 8 pm** on **Saturday, April 29; Sunday, April 30; Wednesday, April 5; Thursday, April 6; Friday, April 7; and Saturday, April 8, 2017**. Voters can visit any advance voting location in their electoral district to vote at advance voting.

**Absentee Voting**

For those who cannot visit their assigned voting place, absentee voting allows individuals to vote at any voting place in the province on either the general voting day or during advanced voting (see above).

While those who visit a voting place in the electoral district in which they reside will vote with an ordinary ballot that lists the names of the candidates in that electoral district, those visiting a voting place outside of their electoral district will have to write-in their preferred candidate or registered political party as they will receive a blank ballot.

**Alternative Absentee Voting**

Those who cannot vote at any voting place in the province can either vote by mail or at a district electoral office. In order to qualify for alternative absentee voting, individuals must:

1. expect to be out of the province on general voting day;
2. have a physical disability, illness, or injury which prevents them from visiting a voting place;
3. be prevented from visiting a voting place for reasons beyond their control, such as bad weather.

**Special Voting**

District Electoral Officers hold special voting opportunities for eligible voters who cannot visit a regular voting place because they are in hospital, a mental health facility, a long-term care facility, a remote work site, or a correctional centre. In these situations, District Electoral Officers help voters to vote at these locations by serving them with a mobile voting team.
For further information, please visit http://www.elections.bc.ca/.

Locating Your Riding and Candidate Information

BC has 85 electoral districts. To see a layout of the electoral boundaries or to determine in which riding you and/or your organisation reside, please visit: http://maps.gov.bc.ca/ess/hm/ebc/.

To find out which parties are running candidates, which candidates are running in your district, and/or who the leader of each party is, please refer to: http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/who-s-running-in-the-2017-british-columbia-election-1.3786771. Please note that Candidates can be nominated up until Tuesday, April 18th, 2017, so check back frequently for the most current list of candidates in your riding and/or province-wide.
The Provincial Political System

The Sustainable Development Goals cover a broad spectrum of issues, not all of which the provincial government can directly affect. In accordance with *The Constitution Act, 1867 to 1982*[^3][^4], Canada has three levels of government – federal, provincial, and municipal – each possessing different responsibilities.

The federal government has executive powers over:

- federal taxes
- national defence
- foreign affairs and treaties
- employment insurance
- banking and currency
- regulating trade and commerce
- coastal and inland fisheries
- navigation, shipping, railways, telephones and pipelines
- Indigenous lands and rights
- criminal law and criminal procedure
- penitentiaries
- citizenship

The provincial government has executive powers over:

- direct (provincial) taxes
- hospitals and the health sector
- prisons
- education
- marriage formalisation
- property and civil rights
- crown land
- natural resources
- municipalities
- administration of civil and criminal justice
- matters of local or private nature

The Constitution Act further indicates that the federal and provincial governments share


powers over:

- agriculture
- immigration
- old age pensions

Within the federal government, the Department for Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) is responsible for the government’s fulfilment of obligations and commitments to First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and the North. Further to the Constitution Act, the Indian Act outlines the powers conferred upon the Indigenous peoples of Canada.

Each Band democratically elects a band council and chief, the actions of which are regulated by the Indian Act. Laws can be made by chief and council covering the following issue areas for band land residents:

- health, including management of contagious and infectious diseases
- law and order
- infrastructure construction and maintenance
- agriculture and environment
- water supplies
- trade and commerce
- wild game, fish, and animal management and preservation

While this separation of powers does determine the respective executives’ and representatives’ responsibilities, that does not limit provincial governments and elected representatives from engaging in the issues beyond provincial control. The Premier of British Columbia and the MLAs that will comprise the next government can enjoy greater opportunities to engage with the federal government, potentially influencing how it engages domestically – with the SDGs that align with the federal executive powers – and internationally.

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Conducting Advocacy During an Election

BCCIC and the BC 2030 campaign are both non-partisan, as is this election toolkit. Registered charities – whether a non-profit, non-governmental organisation, network, or coalition – must be cognisant of how they engage in political activities. The Canada Revenue Agency Policy statement (CPS-022)\(^7\) establishes the legal guidelines to which registered charities in Canada must adhere. Though this policy is currently under review, and BCCIC is actively engaged in this review, the following guidelines should help inform registered charities’ engagement with political campaigns, parties, and candidates.

Partisan, Prohibited Activity
While charitable activities are not legally defined in Canada, the courts have determined political purposes to be those that seek to:

- further the interests of a particular political party;
- support a political party or candidate for public office; and/or
- retain, oppose, or change the law, policy or decision of any level of government of Canada or a foreign country.\(^8\)

Provided that registered charities are, by law, required to have exclusively charitable purposes, charitable organisations **may not**:

- endorse a candidate or party publicly, either in person or through communication platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, newsletters, or email;
- enable the use of their equipment, facilities, volunteers, or other resources by a candidate or party;
- make financial or non-financial donations to a candidate or political party, be it direct or indirect.


\(^8\) Ibid.
## Dos and Don’ts for Registered Charities

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<tr>
<td>Meet with your candidates to share your experiences, stories, and contributions</td>
<td>Support or oppose any specific candidate or political party</td>
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<td>Call on your members and the public to support policies and programmes that will help your organisation meet its aims and objectives</td>
<td>Use your social media properties to indicate support or opposition to specific candidates</td>
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<td>Support your charitable mandate and initiatives by championing them with your MLA</td>
<td>Use your organisation’s resources to buy tickets to a political fundraiser</td>
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<td>Make MLAs and candidates welcome at your events</td>
<td>Contribute prizes for partisan promotional purposes</td>
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<td>Post on social media about upcoming political events, encouraging people to submit questions pertaining to your organisation’s work</td>
<td>Use your organisation’s resources or volunteers to support or oppose specific candidates</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engage with coalitions and networks and support their non-partisan messages through meetings with elected officials or candidates, letter writing campaigns, and social media messages</td>
<td>Do not favour one candidate or party over another</td>
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<td>Encourage staff to vote (and provide information about the logistics of where to vote and what they need to bring to their voting place)</td>
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Given that the CRA policy is under review, some of these guidelines could change before the election. If you are a registered charity, check [http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/charitiesandgiving/](http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/charitiesandgiving/) for any changes that may affect your activities during the campaign and engagement on behalf of BC 2030.

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Engaging Your Candidates - Individuals

Meeting the Candidates
There are a variety of ways to meet and engage with candidates, both directly and indirectly, during an electoral campaign.

Attend Public Events
Candidate events are a great way to get candidates on the record about their policy positions. They also provide individuals with the opportunity to meet the candidates and make a connection with them. And, since reporters often attend these events, you may get the chance to talk with the media and provide them with information that they, too, can use while covering election issues. The following tips may help to make the most out of candidates’ events:

- Check candidates’ websites and/or social media accounts for a calendar of events. If possible, sign up for their email newsletter to receive updates.
- Do background research on the candidates and their policy positions/past actions that affect the issue(s) you are concerned with. By referencing these, you can demonstrate to the candidate your level of awareness, engagement, and concern for an issue.
- Write out your question(s) so that you stay focused and on point. If you have copies, you can provide them to campaign staff and media in attendance.
- Keep your question(s) clear, concise, and specific.
- When speaking, introduce yourself and then ask your question. If the candidate responds but doesn’t answer your question, ask a follow-up question. It is okay to tell them that they didn’t answer your question and then restate it.
- Find any media in the room (often they will be wearing their credentials). Tell them why the question you will ask/have asked is important and provide any background information that you have on hand. Let them know whether or not the candidate’s response was satisfactory.
- Talk with campaign staff and, if you haven’t done this already, ask to arrange a meeting with the campaign/candidate.

Set A Meeting with the Campaigns
Contact the campaigns of all candidates in your electoral district. Call the campaign office and ask to speak with the candidate or their campaign manager and tell them you would like to meet with him or her and any other policy-oriented staff. The candidate’s goal is to get elected so they need to hear why making the SDGs a component of their campaign will benefit them; meeting with the campaign directly can be a great opportunity to convince them. It may help to address three main elements:
● The problem(s): tell them why they should care about the SDGs. If you can, provide them with a short (one-page) fact sheet that outlines the problem and your key messages.

● Draw an explicit connection between the problem and how the specific SDG goal(s) and target(s) would help to address this problem for your community, district, or region.

● Provide policy solutions: though you don’t need to provide technical details, providing a candidate with evidence-based solutions to the problem that align with the SDG goal(s) and target(s) can help ensure that the candidate not only embraces the problem but, also, does so in the best way possible.

At the meeting, be sure to stick to this agenda and, if possible, acknowledge the candidate’s position and/or any previous work they have done on the issue. Following the meeting, each person who took part should follow up with an email, letter, or phone call to thank the candidate and any staff that attended for their time, to briefly recap what you talked about reiterate the importance of this issue, and remind the candidate of any commitments they may have made during the meeting. See Appendix III for a sample thank you letter.

Write to the Candidates
If you are unable to engage the candidates publicly, or arrange a meeting with the candidates, you can still write to them – either a letter or an email. Much of the same approach applies for writing your candidates as engaging with them directly; however, in this case, you have the added ability to provide more background information on the issue. The key, still, is to be clear, concise, and on point. See Appendix IV for a BC 2030 template letter which you can personalise to your candidates and the issues in your community and/or region.

Encourage Your School Officials to Engage with the Candidates
If you are enrolled in a post-secondary institution, you can write a letter to your school’s president, dean, chancellor, provost, and/or the chair of your specific faculty. As a secondary school student, you can write to your district’s board of trustees and/or superintendent. Appendix V provides a template for writing to academic representatives, seeking their engagement with the candidates on the SDGs and BC 2030. Letters may be sent by individuals or through school societies, faculties, classes and/or a coalition of students.

Using Traditional Media
Traditional media includes television, radio, newspapers, magazines, newsletters, and other print or online publications. During the election campaign, the traditional media will
be saturated, meaning that BC 2030 will be competing for limited time and space. Here are some tips for getting your issues and the BC 2030 campaign into the traditional media’s spotlight:

- Do an online search for media clippings that are similar to what you would be looking to publish, take note of the reporters and news sources that are covering this type of news so you may reach out to them directly.
- Call your local radio, television stations, and community newspapers and ask for the name and contact information for any reporters covering the election.
- Have background information on the SDGs, BC 2030, and your community’s issue areas accessible and be ready to answer any questions (Who, What, When, Where, Why, How)
- Have local examples to illustrate your proposed media piece as much as possible
- Read, listen, and watch election coverage daily, and follow reporters on Twitter.
- Respond to reporters who have covered stories on topics you are glad to see in the news, use this as an opportunity to introduce yourself and present yourself as a future resource on the topic (if applicable)
- Write letters to the editor or commentaries for local newspapers (see Appendix VI).
- Raise issues with reporters by calling them directly or writing a news release (see Appendix VII).
- Build relationships with reporters by supplying them with reliable information and by making the link between the election campaign and BC 2030 issues of importance to your community.
- Be persistent, if you send an email, follow-up with a phone call. Often emails sent to traditional media outlets get marked as spam or will take too long for a reporter to get to. Follow-up calls result in a much higher chance of your story being picked up or at minimum that someone at the news outlet has received a call and heard about BC2030 and the SDGs.
- Make a point to thank reporters who have covered a story you have pitched.

IMPORTANT: When talking to the media, unless otherwise stated, assume that you are on the record. This means that everything you say could appear in print or be broadcast.

Using Social Media

Politicians are increasingly engaging with their constituents using their social media accounts. Social media provides a new and evolving way of interacting with politicians. With many politicians required to attend to their accounts and respond to tweets and posts within a specific timeframe, this can be an efficient way of reaching out and publicly interacting with candidates. The public nature of these forums allow for short, to the point dialogue that is instantly part of a public record.

Facebook
Post messages on your Facebook page to promote local debates and candidates’ events, inviting your friends to attend and ask questions about the SDGs. After events, you can post photos and videos with comments about what’s happened or what commitments the candidates may have made toward Agenda 2030.

**Twitter**

On Twitter, you can engage directly with candidates. Tweet your messages and questions to candidates, using their twitter handle and the hashtags for the initiative. You can also include BCCIC’s twitter handle ‘@BCCIC’ and the #BC2030 hashtag. Any response you receive can then be re-tweeted. You can also live-tweet updates from candidates’ events.

**Blogs**

Locate influential bloggers and share the BC 2030 initiative with them. Influential bloggers are those with a enough of an online following that anything they may post about will garner attention. Reach out to bloggers who seem likely to support the media piece you are looking to circulate. Reach out to them by a variety of communication channels. Influential bloggers will often be active on social media using this as a platform to interact with their followings and promoting new posts. Provide background information on the SDGs, how they relate to your community/region, and BC 2030. You may even be able to submit posts to some blogs.
Engaging Your Candidates – Organisations and Networks

Meeting the Candidates
In addition to the strategies for individuals outlined above, there are further opportunities for organisations and networks to engage with the candidates.

Host the Candidate
Depending on the type and physical structure of your organisation, inviting the candidates to visit can be an effective strategy to educate and show them the importance of the organisation’s work. Ideally, this will help to reinforce your BC 2030 messaging. The following tips may help organise candidate visits:

- Make contact with each candidates’ campaign office early in the election campaign and have a few dates and times in mind. Be aware that candidates’ schedules will become increasingly busier as the campaign progresses, with little spare time in the days leading up to the election.
- If a candidate is going to visit your programme, you can potentially send out a media notice in advance. Follow up with calls and/or emails to local media, inviting them to cover the visit. Use social media to announce and publicise the visit.
- Prepare an agenda in advance of the visit that focuses on three main areas: the problem/issue and its relation to the SDGs, the role of your organisation in addressing this, and potential policy responses your organisation would like to see from the future government.
- Put together a package of key information, including your programmatic details and desired policy positions and outcomes.
- Talk about the issues in terms that will resonate with the candidates by linking your concerns to their priorities. Show the candidates how your organisation’s work is working towards issues they are concerned with. Background research on the candidates and their past public service and/or policy positions and legislative votes will be important here.
- After the visit, send a follow-up email to the candidates, thanking them for their visit and reiterating any commitments or positions they may have made. Post photos of the candidates’ visits to your social media accounts and/or website.

Host a Candidate Forum
If you can’t host the candidates at your organisation or if, in addition, you want to host an event for the public to attend, an all-candidates forum is a great opportunity to simultaneously engage with each candidate in your riding. Again, the following tips may help to organise such an event:

- Put together a draft agenda for the event, outlining the issues you want to cover,
who will speak, when and how much time they will have, and the format of your event. Keep in mind that the format\(^{10}\) you select will likely affect the tone and outcomes:

**Question and Answer**

1. Equal time Q&A: the moderator questions the candidates, who are then allowed equal response time. The questions asked can be the same for all candidates, or they may be individualised, so long as each candidate receives equal time to respond.

2. Follow up Q&A: the moderator asks the candidates questions, and can follow up their responses with additional questions. This format prevents candidates from evading the question. You will need to determine whether the moderator will be the sole questioner, or whether the candidates can pose follow-up questions to one another as well.

3. Town meeting Q&A: members of the audience ask the candidates all the questions. For the best results, questions should be pre-screened to avoid partisan questions and ensure substantive content. This format allows constituents to inform candidates on the issues that are concerning the riding.

**Debate**

4. Prepared and spontaneous debate: several questions are prepared in advance and shared with the candidates. A selection of these will be asked at the debate, by the moderator, opponents, and/or the audience, for the candidates to answer spontaneously.

5. Discourse debate: the moderator asks a question that the candidates then discuss. This format requires a strong but non-partisan moderator in order to control candidates who may try to control the conversation.

**Other**

6. Feedback: focusing on issues specific to your organisation/network, have an expert introduce the concern and provide solutions. After this presentation, the moderator will ask the candidates to provide specific proposals to address the concerns presented. Allow the candidates to conclude with closing remarks.

Regardless of the format you select, you can include an informal Q&A session at the end.

Also be certain to explain the format to attendees at the outset of the forum in order to avoid confusion.

- Identify all the candidates running for election in your organisation’s riding and set a date, time, and location for the forum. Begin by calling the candidate’s headquarters to provide the date, time, location, anticipated audience size and type, an outline of the format and, where appropriate, a list of the questions. Be prepared to explain why the candidates should be interested in participating in your forum. Ensure candidates of the forum’s neutrality and that all candidates will receive equal treatment. Follow-up this call with an official email invitation when all details have been finalised.

- Notify the media and provide preliminary information about the event, indicating that certain detail may change as they are finalised.

- Locate and book a moderator for the forum. Keep in mind that you want someone who is well informed on the issues in your riding such that (depending on the format) they can ask appropriate follow-up questions, as well as treat the candidates equally.

- Once you have confirmed the attendance of the candidates, the moderator, and the date, time, and location, invite the guests. This may be an open invitation to all constituents, or it may be closed and limited to those in your network. Keep in mind that the audience may influence the candidate’s motivation to attend your forum. Continuously recruit attendees, keeping in mind that not all who agree to come will make it.

- Put out a press release (and follow up with local media) regarding the forum, providing the date, time, location, and confirmed attendees (candidates, moderator, experts). Additionally, invite the media to the event.

- Conduct background research on the different candidates’ relevant policy positions and, where possible, their prior work on the issues to be addressed at the forum. Obtain the candidates’ biographies from their campaign offices (for their introductions).

- Send out reminders to all scheduled speakers (candidates, moderator, experts) as well as to the target audience and media a week before/in the days leading up to the event.

- On the day of the event, put up signs directing attendees to the precise location; set up name tags for the candidates and moderator; put out information on your organisation/network and BC 2030; take photographs and record the event to share on your website and/or social media accounts.

**Send Out a Candidate Questionnaire**

While BCCIC will be sending a BC 2030 questionnaire to each of the provincial party leaders,
your organisation may wish to do so with its local candidates running for election. This will allow you to create a questionnaire tailored to either the issues most relevant to your organisation or those of greatest concern to your community, or both. If you plan to host the candidates at your organisation or a public forum, you may wish to send out a questionnaire in advance to help inform the questions (in this case follow-up questions) you ask the candidates. Appendix VII provides a template for both a candidate questionnaire and a cover letter, both of which can be customised to your organisation and locality. Additionally, when sending out a candidate questionnaire, organisations should keep the following in mind:

- Keep the questionnaire brief so as to encourage busy candidates to respond.
- Ask open-ended questions to ensure more than a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer from the candidates.
- Send the same questionnaire to each candidate. Provide a deadline to receive their responses, word limits for each response, and your plans for sharing their answers after the deadline (i.e. where the questions and answers will be posted online or how they will be distributed to your network).
- If your organisation is a registered charity, be sure to mention that you are non-partisan and will not be supporting any candidate but rather wish to elicit each candidate’s positions and make these available to your organisation’s followers and networks.
- Conversely, if your organisation is not a registered charity and you plan to publicly endorse a candidate and/or party, you should indicate as much in your cover letter. In this case, you will also need to remove any mention of BC 2030 from the questionnaire.

**Promoting Broader Civic Engagement**

Though indirect, promoting civic engagement in your community/region is an integral aspect of engaging with the candidates. The more voters that are invested in the BC 2030 initiative, the greater the incentive for candidates to focus on the SDGs in their individual campaigns. This can take a variety of forms, from increasing voter turnout to educating the electorate on BC 2030, the SDGs, and the candidates’ respective positions in relation to the different goals.
Messaging

Basic Principles
There are three basic principles to keep in mind when composing the messaging you will use to engage with the candidates:

1. Do your research: know the candidates’ backgrounds, policy platforms, party platforms, and previous work. Know what their priorities are and what they care about. You will earn the candidate’s respect (and, accordingly, their ear) if you can show that you’ve done this research and can credit the work they have already done on specific issues related to your concern(s). You can also, potentially, pre-empt the candidate’s response being a mere recitation of their policy position by showing that you already know this and are looking to engage at a deeper level.

2. Know your audience: just because an issue is important to you/your community does not necessarily mean that a candidate will be equally concerned. By knowing what issues your candidates are already focused on (thanks to your research), you can draw links between your area(s) of concern and their area(s) of concern. Show the candidates how their platform may already resonate with the issues you/your organisation/your community would like to see addressed.

3. Choose the right messenger: just as your background research on the candidates can inform how you engage them on the issues you’re concerned with, it can help determine who will have the most influence over the candidates. Where possible, find the appropriate people to engage as champions in your community; this could be business owners, law enforcement, religious leaders, health care professionals, and/or educators. Recruit these people as an added and influential voice for your cause.

Key Messages

Overall Message

BC 2030 is a non-partisan public engagement initiative that looks to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as an opportunity for British Columbia to demonstrate provincial leadership on global issues.

With communities around the province and world increasingly feeling the impacts of global issues such as poverty, inequality, and climate change, BC 2030 seeks to engage British Columbians on how local issues faced within our province are connected to a larger global framework. British Columbia will play a major role in contributing to collective global progress toward sustainable development through its provincial management of health
and education programs, natural resources, and the administration of civil and criminal justice.

BC 2030 recognizes the importance of moving to action as quickly as possible and focuses on our upcoming 2017 provincial election as a platform to explore this conversation in a provincial context and invite our political leaders to expand their thinking. BC 2030 will engage with candidates to bring focus to pathways that can be taken to create and enhance policy coherence, inter-governmental communication, and an integrated approach to the challenges we all face moving forward.

BC 2030 is an invitation to think differently. The global goals are brand new and the world is still trying to figure out how to best go about achieving them. There is space and need right now for innovative leadership in Canada on what implementation of these goals looks like at a subnational level. British Columbia has an opportunity to be this leader.

The SDGs are a framework of 17 goals that aim to address the world’s environmental, social, economic, and security challenges. In September 2015, Canada, alongside all 193 UN member states, committed to achieving these goals unanimously. Unprecedented in nature, these new global goals are universal, interconnected, and aspirational. They recognize every country’s and all people’s responsibility to contribute to solutions. They highlight partnership and collaboration, asserting that success hinges on our ability to move away from silos. They challenge us to move past a business as usual mentality and seek innovative and transformative solutions. The goals invite all people and all tiers of government to understand where they fit into a bigger picture.

The Elevator Pitch

BC 2030 is a province-wide initiative that looks to the UN Sustainable Development Goals as an opportunity for BC to demonstrate provincial leadership on global issues. It is an invitation to think differently. The current election cycle presents an opportunity for communities and candidates to move to action on the global goals they are feeling the impact of locally - from poverty and inequality to climate change and renewable energy development. There is a space and a need right now for innovative leadership in Canada and across the provinces on achieving these goals and BC has an opportunity to lead the way. The 17 global goals aim to address the world's environmental, social, economic, and security challenges while recognising every country's and all people's responsibility to contribute to solutions.
Thematic Messages

The UN Sustainable Development Goals:
What They Are

The SDGs are a framework of 17 goals with 169 targets that aim to address the world’s environmental, social, economic, and security challenges.

They are aspirational (stretch goals): challenging us to move past a business as usual mentality for seeking solutions. The SDGs are a vision statement - not of what we can currently accomplish but what we must accomplish.

They are interconnected and indivisible: Each and all of the goals are interdependent: no one goal can be fully realized without achieving the others. Addressing climate change (Goal 13) will require achieving quality education (Goal 4), sustainable consumption, and production patterns (Goal 12), along with many other SDGs.

They are universal: The SDGs apply to all countries, including Canada. The Goal 1 objective of “ending poverty everywhere in all its forms for everyone“ applies to those living in the shanty towns of Nigeria as well as those sleeping on the streets of Vancouver.

Why the SDGs are Important

- The SDGs offer a common global language to tackle global issues among all tiers of government, all sectors, all countries, and all people
- They allow for each of us to better understand how we fit into the bigger picture moving forward
- They create a tangible link between what are perceived as local and global issues
- It gives us a common set of targets and indicators toward which to advocate action
- The goals are a global vision and mission statement to strategically guide the world over the next 15 years
- Adoption of the goals means we are all now working toward the same targets

What do the UN Sustainable Development Goals have to do with BC?

- Under a universal agenda, many provincial resources and program areas are key to achieving the SDGs
● Community/municipal vision documents and plans provide a realizable mode of implementation for the goals to link up to federal commitments
● The SDGs provide an opportunity to embed the SDG agenda framework into provincial political discourse and engagement
● Canada is required to report on our progress toward achieving these goals, BC will need to be responsible for the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of those goals which fall within provincial jurisdiction.
● While many of BC’s civil society groups are already demonstrating SDG leadership, the scope of the SDG agenda must involve greater collaboration and communication with political leaders to ensure that these goals resonate with every individual in the province.
Post-Election Engagement
Candidate engagement does not end just because the campaigns are over. With a deadline of 2030 for the SDGs, BC 2030 will continue to engage with British Columbia’s communities and their elected representatives well past the May 2017 provincial election in order to achieve meaningful progress towards the seventeen goals.

Meeting with Your Elected Representative
After the election, call to congratulate your newly-elected official. If possible, set up a meeting with your MLA so that, if you were not able to do so during the campaign, you/your organisation can begin to build a long-standing relationship with your elected representative. Get to know their positions on the issues of most concern to you, your organisation, and/or your community. Also use the meeting as an opportunity to educate, letting your MLA know where you stand on the issues and what you would like to seem from them. Remember, it doesn't matter whether you voted for your MLA or not; they have been elected to represent you and your interests in provincial Legislature for the next four years.

Depending on your level of expertise and availability, you might also want to provide yourself to them as a resource for future policy discussions. Elected representatives are rarely experts on all areas of governance. Your MLA may welcome your future willingness to help them critically engage with policy issues where you have experience.

Finally, if you were able to engage with the elected representative during the campaign, remind them of the promises, assurances, or positions they may have made which positively align with your area of concern. Where you have concerns about the foreseeable consequences of a representative or their party’s policy positions, find ways to constructively address these. This means providing detailed examples of how their policy will negatively impact the community.

Write to your Non-Elected Representatives
Just because a candidate does not win election does not mean that they lose their voice. After the election, write them to thank them for their effort and prompt them to continue their meaningful engagement in the issues facing your and their shared community. These individuals may consider running again in the future, so maintaining your relationship with them may prove fruitful in time. Even if they do not plan to run again, though, they are likely to remain involved and invested in the community. Staying engaged with them may provide a voice to the issues and the SDGs of greatest concern to you.
Attribution

This toolkit has been informed by a number of other similarly-oriented election toolkits, compiled and made available online by:

Alliance for Arts and Culture


Nonprofit Voter Engagement Network


North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation


National Skills Coalition


We Can Do Better 2015

Appendix

Appendix I: Millennium Development Goals

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Appendix II: Sustainable Development Goals\textsuperscript{12}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{1} NO POVERTY
  \item \textbf{2} ZERO HUNGER
  \item \textbf{3} GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
  \item \textbf{4} QUALITY EDUCATION
  \item \textbf{5} GENDER EQUALITY
  \item \textbf{6} CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION
  \item \textbf{7} AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY
  \item \textbf{8} DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
  \item \textbf{9} INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
  \item \textbf{10} REDUCED INEQUALITIES
  \item \textbf{11} SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
  \item \textbf{12} RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION
  \item \textbf{13} CLIMATE ACTION
  \item \textbf{14} LIFE BELOW WATER
  \item \textbf{15} LIFE ON LAND
  \item \textbf{16} PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS
  \item \textbf{17} PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS
\end{itemize}

Appendix III: Thank You Letter/Email

Dear [Insert Candidate’s Name],

Thank you for meeting with me yesterday. I very much appreciated the opportunity to discuss [issue] with you and your campaign staff.

As we discussed, [Recap Key Topics Covered]

I appreciate your stance that [...] and commitment to [...].

As I have mentioned, as a supporter of BC 2030 initiative, I will vote for a candidate and a party that will act to [...] 

Again, thank you for your time and for allowing me to discuss these important issues with you.

Sincerely,

[Insert Name]
Appendix IV: Letter/Email to the Candidate

Dear [Insert Name],

As a supporter of the BC 2030 initiative, I will vote for a candidate and a party that will act towards [ ...]. While Agenda 2030 is of global origins, the Sustainable Development Goals resonate provincially, regionally, and locally to ensure improved livelihoods for all British Columbians.

In particular, I’m concerned about [ ...].

Will you push for action on these issues if elected as my MLA? Please let me know how you and your party would tackle [ ...].

Thank you, in advance, for your time; I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

[Insert Name]
Appendix V: Letter to Academic Representatives

[Insert Name,
Title,
Institution Name
Address]

Dear [Insert Name],

During the current provincial election campaign, I am supporting BC 2030 – a province-wide initiative to make the Sustainable Development Goals a part of the 2017 provincial election, with all party candidates, the media, and key stakeholders engaging in the discourse and putting forward strategies and commitments towards establishing the province as a leader in realising the SDGs.

While Agenda 2030 is of global origins, the Sustainable Development Goals resonate provincially, regionally, and locally to ensure improved livelihoods for all British Columbians. As a leader of [School District/Institution Name], you have a unique opportunity to engage with the candidates and parties on behalf of our academic community.

In particular, I am concerned about [Goals/Issues of Greatest Concern].

Will you push for action on these issues in our community and, where possible, with the candidates?

Thank you, in advance, for your time; I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

[Insert Name,
Contact Information]
Appendix V: Letter to the Editor

Op-eds or letters to the editor should:

- be relevant to recent news
- be well written
- be clear and concise
- convey expertise
- provide a different or unexpected perspective.

Tips for placing an op-ed/letter to the editor:

Determine which newspaper you will write to and locate – either online or in the paper itself – the opinion or editorial page. Here, you should be able to find guidelines for submitting an op-ed/guest commentary. Alternatively, some newspapers will provide this information online on their ‘contact’ page. Be sure to follow these to ensure your submission is accepted. For example, newspapers will likely post a word limit; adhere to this or risk having your piece edited to fit their requirement.

When you submit your op-ed, per the newspaper’s instructions, include a 2-3 sentence pitch for why it should be published. Include in this pitch what you are writing about, why this is relevant news to the paper’s readers, and why your opinion matters (including your credentials). Below this, paste your finished op-ed and provide your contact information: name, title, address, phone number, and email address.

Where possible, find out who decides which op-eds to publish at the newspaper and call them; ask whether they received your op-ed and when they will decide whether or not it will be published. Give yourself plenty of time to get your piece published, particularly given the time-sensitivity of an election campaign. If you opt to submit your op-ed at another publication, let the newspaper know that you are withdrawing your submission at their paper.

The Globe and Mail’s Public Editor has previously written13 how they select letters to the editor for publishing, providing tips that can be applied regardless of the targeted news source:

- be short, witty, and relevant to recent news coverage (reference articles where appropriate/possible);
- try to present a new view or point in the conversation;

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how well your letter is written may impact its selection so do take the time to edit.

To Letters to the Editor:

I want to vote for a candidate and a party that will act to [...]. We should be hearing more from candidates on this/these issues, and it should be put on the provincial election campaign agenda.

Why? Because [...] 

British Columbians care about this/these issue(s) and want their elected leaders to act.

[Insert Name]
[any other information required by the specific newspaper (ie. address, phone number, affiliations)]
Appendix VI: News Release

NEWS RELEASE

Embargo: For Immediate Release

What: Event Type/Title
Where: [Street address, city/town, room number]
When: [Date and time]
Who: [Name all speakers attending]

[Organisation] will be hosting an all candidates [debate/forum/meeting] in advance of the May 2017 provincial election. All candidates running for MLA in [Riding] have been invited and [Names and Party Affiliation] will be in attendance. The [debate/forum/meeting] will be hosted/moderated by [Name]. Though this event will be an opportunity for constituents to engage with the candidates and their platforms, it will specifically seek to elicit policy positions and commitments from the candidates regarding the Sustainable Development Goals.

This is in line with BC 2030 - a British Columbia-wide initiative to make the Sustainable Development Goals a part of the 2017 provincial election, with all party candidates, the media, and key stakeholders engaging in the discourse and putting forward strategies and commitments towards establishing the province as a leader in realising the SDGs. BC 2030 is being directed by the BC Council for International Cooperation, a coalition of international development and civil society organisations that are engaged in sustainable development and social justice issues.

For more information on the event, please contact:

[Name]
[phone number]
[email]
[website]

For more information on BC 2030, please contact:

BC Council for International Cooperation
1 (604) 899-4475
info@bccic.ca
http://bccic.ca
Appendix VII: Candidate Questionnaire

[Date]

Dear [Candidate’s Name],

In advance of the 2017 provincial election in British Columbia, the BC Council for International Cooperation\(^4\) has launched BC 2030 – an initiative that brings attention to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Ultimately, BC 2030 envisions our province as a national and global leader in achieving all 17 goals.

The BC 2030 initiative has held 48 roundtable discussions in communities throughout the province, meeting with over 600 community leaders through three-hour workshops, to understand which issues and goals are of greatest importance to constituents. We are now determining candidates’ positions and proposed policy responses to the goals. We are requesting that you respond to the following questionnaire.

The questions and answers, if received by [deadline], will be published verbatim on/at [website] by [date]. We will also make the questionnaires publicly available across our network, on our social media channels, and through our listserv. If we do not receive your responses by [date], the publication will state ‘Did Not Respond’.

Please keep your answers to the indicated word limit.

You can send your response to [Name & Position] at [email address].

As a non-partisan initiative, BC 2030 and [Organisation] are seeking to elicit policy positions on a variety of issues, and will be doing so equally for all party candidates. We will make this information available to the public, but we will not support or oppose any candidates. Therefore, we hope you will seize this opportunity to share your policy positions on a variety of issues in which the constituents of [Community/Riding] have taken great interest.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

[Name]
[Contact Information]
[Organisation’s Logo/Info]

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\(^4\) BCCIC is a coalition of sustainable development and civil society organisations that is one of the leading voices for civil society organisations in the province, acting as a liaison among provincial and federal governments on matters related to Canada’s sustainable development agenda.
1. If elected, how would you support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in British Columbia, provincially and locally in [Community/Riding]? [300 words]

2. What do you consider to be the priority issues facing the [Riding]? How do these issues connect to the Sustainable Development Goals? [300 words]

3. What targets, timelines, and indicators will you set for addressing these priority issues if elected? [400 words]

4. [Organisation] is specifically concerned with [Issue]; how would you work to address this if you are elected? [200 words]

5. How would you work with [Organisation/Network] toward creating meaningful targets and evidence-based indicators for addressing [issue]? [200 words]

6. How will you work to make the Sustainable Development Goals a part of debates and policy conversations in the BC Legislature? [200 words]
In September 2015, the world came together in New York to adopt a new global agenda – Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Agenda 2030). This agenda was a product of three years of negotiations between all United Nations member states and active members of global civil society. At the core of Agenda 2030 are the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The SDGs are a framework of 17 goals and 169 targets that seek to address the world’s environmental, social, economic, and security challenges. The SDG framework has three notable characteristics. First, the Goals are aspirational; they challenge us to move past a business-as-usual mentality to pursue transformative change. That is, the Goals are a vision statement of what must be accomplished, rather than what we currently are able to accomplish. Second, the Goals are interconnected and indivisible – no one goal will be realised without addressing all 17 of the goals. Finally, the Goals are universal. While the predecessors to the SDGs – the Millennium Development Goals – spoke more specifically to the concerns facing developing countries, the SDGs better cover issues that transcend political borders and defy countries’ income levels.

While the Canadian government is a signatory to Agenda 2030, our federal political system and its Constitutional separation of responsibilities between the provincial and federal governments further underscores the importance of the provinces’ role in realising our national targets. Currently, the provinces represent a missing link between Canada’s international agreements and national documents at the federal level and community vision documents and plans at the municipal level. Additionally, as a signatory to Agenda 2030, Canada is required to report on our progress towards achieving the SDGs, and BC will be responsible for implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of those goals which fall under provincial jurisdiction.

Recognising this necessary role for the province, the BC Council for International Cooperation (BCCIC)\(^1\) has launched BC 2030 – a non-partisan initiative that looks to the UN Sustainable Development Goals as an opportunity for British Columbians to demonstrate provincial leadership on global issues. The upcoming provincial election in May 2017 presents a unique opportunity to engage with communities and politicians across British Columbia toward raising the profile of the SDGs. The BC 2030 Campaign launched in late summer 2016 with 48 roundtables held in 30 communities across the province, building on previous appreciative inquiry workshops. These roundtables introduced the SDGs to various communities to help them realise the inherent commonalities between their concerns, current community plans, and the SDGs. Follow up community roundtables have been focused on consolidating support for BC 2030, understanding which goals and issues are of greatest priority, and promoting community engagement with electoral candidates moving forward.

\(^1\) BCCIC is a coalition of sustainable development and civil society organisations that is one of the leading voices for civil society organisations in the province, acting as a liaison among provincial and federal governments on matters related to Canada’s sustainable development agenda.
The Sustainable Development Goals

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation.
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries.
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development.
15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.
16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development.

T: 604-899-4475 E: info@bccic.ca @BCCIC#BC2030